



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

MARIA SHRIVER
Honorary Chair

MARIE MORETTI
Executive Director

November 15, 2004

Dear Emergency Manager:

It is my pleasure to submit this *Template for Spontaneous Volunteer Management – Guidance For Local Government And Operational Areas* on behalf of the state Citizen Corps Program team and everyone who participated in its development. As you recall, one of the state requirements for the Fiscal Year 2004 Citizen Corps Program grant recipients is to complete a draft volunteer coordination plan by the end of the two-year performance period (December 31, 2005). As part of this task, the state Citizen Corps Program committed to developing a template to be offered as a standardized tool to meet this requirement. The attached document fulfills that need.

This template is the result of an intensive process among a diverse array of stakeholders in California emergency management—local and state government, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, first responders, emergency managers, service programs and community-based groups. The feedback and involvement of these entities have allowed this excellent tool to be developed with the interests of all Californians in mind.

As surely as disasters and emergencies will happen in California, volunteers will come. This template was designed to help you manage the coordination of spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers in times of major disasters. These volunteers possess their own skill set but are not affiliated with any recognized disaster relief or emergency response agency. These volunteers often appear on the scene or call to offer assistance. Because many unaffiliated volunteers lack formal disaster or emergency training, there is understandable reluctance among some emergency management professionals, first responders and disaster relief organizations to consider these volunteers as an effective resource. Yet, with the information provided in this template and supporting documents, you can turn the potential problem of spontaneous volunteers into a valuable resource for community response, relief and recovery.

It should be noted that this is a guidance document to assist local governments and Operational Areas in planning and does not reflect the adoption of a new state rule or standard. The guidance is a suggested template and should be revised or adapted to reflect local conditions. Individual

circumstances may require significant variance from this guidance. Local governments are also encouraged to seek legal review before this guidance is implemented in their jurisdiction.

Some principles are interwoven throughout this plan that everyone in emergency management will recognize: volunteers should never self-deploy; pre-affiliating with a response/recovery organization prior to an emergency is highly encouraged; and Disaster Service Worker designation for workers compensation coverage and liability issues should be carried out by local officials in a coordinated manner that reflects local policies. Additionally, while this template was not designed to help you coordinate the well-trained cadre of volunteers you already have working in your various law enforcement, fire/rescue and public safety agencies, it can be adapted to include plans, policies and procedures for established volunteer programs.

By using this template at the local level, a baseline understanding of how to coordinate and utilize spontaneous volunteers will be developed in your local community, and a consistent methodology will take shape statewide. There are many compelling reasons as to why a volunteer management element should be developed in your jurisdiction's emergency management plan; however, whether you plan for them or not, they will come! We hope this template will be a useful tool in your efforts to manage emergencies and disasters—and those citizens who want to help—within your community. The Association of Volunteer Centers of California has sent similar planning packages of information to their local volunteer center affiliates.

To help you with your efforts, we are designing Training and Technical Assistance workshops for local governments and Volunteer Centers in early 2005. Additionally, the following individuals are available to provide you with technical assistance: Adam Sutkus, Director, California's Citizen Corps Program, (916) 324-3056 & Brian Bolton, Executive Director, Association of Volunteer Centers of California, (916) 324-4521.

Additional References to assist you with your volunteer plan project:

- *Volunteer Coordination Plan Template*. Attached and at www.csc.ca.gov
- *Preventing a Disaster Within the Disaster: The Effective Use and Management of Unaffiliated Volunteers*. The Points of Light Foundation, 2002. . <http://www.pointsoflight.org>
- *They Will Come: Post-Disaster Volunteers and Local Governments*. Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Revised 2001. www.oes.ca.gov
- *Managing Spontaneous Volunteers in Times of Disaster: The Synergy of Structure and Good Intentions*. The Points of Light Foundation, 2004. <http://www.pointsoflight.org>

Sincerely,

Adam Sutkus

California Service Corps,
Citizen Corps Program Director
916-324-3056